Landscape, Language, Re-/Connection: Locating and Re-/Connecting to Place in David Bouchard's Cultural Books

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Abstract

David Bouchard bridges cultures in his dual language cultural books through the parallel lenses of cultural capital and cultural literacies. Through representations of the Canadian landscape, and in Indigenous, Michif, and European-descended languages, Bouchard creates narratives of place through poetry, storytelling, and descriptive chirography. The texts, which are complemented by prominent Indigenous artists' illustrations and music, embody a bridge to readers from a multiplicity of cultures. Bouchard's dual language cultural books, demonstrative of the reclamation of Indigenous and Métis history and narrative, can be used as texts of social justice to explore Indigenous cultures, language revitalization, and language maintenance. Bouchard negotiates the Indigenous/Inuit/Métis and mainstream cultures of his ancestry through the underpinning terms of landscape and language and, ultimately, finds a home within multiple cultures which he shares with readers so that they might find their home, too.

Keywords

Bouchard; Michif; Cree; Delaware; Kwak'wala; Mi'kmaq; Ojibway; Innu; Lenape; Indigenous; Canadian; reading; new literacies; cultural texts; dual language texts; picture books; history; environment; citizenship; social justice; cultural books

Introduction

David Bouchard bridges cultures through his dual language "cultural books"[1] and the visual art that amplifies them. Dual language books are those which move between two languages and often feature illustrations that represent or extend the textual narrative (Naqvi, Thorne, Pfitscher, Nordstokke, & McKeough, 2012, p. 4). Dual language books support literacy development amongst early readers (Cummins, 2007; Ma, 2008) as well as emergent literacy learners (Naqvi, McKeough, Thorne & Pfitscher, 2012; Naqvi, Thorne, Pfitscher, Nordstokke & McKeough, 2012). Bouchard's texts are dual language in that the narratives are visually present in two languages: either English or French and an Indigenous language. Some of the texts also feature CDs on which the narrative is read in several Indigenous languages. While Bouchard's texts are often to be found in children's literature sections in bookshops and libraries, he has indicated a preference for his texts to be referred to as cultural books,[2] suggesting the possibility for the books to be used beyond the elementary school level to explore culture and the representation of culture and, by extension, as texts of social justice education. Bouchard's texts occupy the space suggested by his term 'cultural book' in that the texts consciously and explicitly engage with culture, and its interconnections with language and place and history, within

[1] Bouchard, D. (nd). *Education Today cover story: On becoming a reader.* Retrieved from: http://www.davidbouchard.com/About.html.

[2] Bouchard, D. (nd*). Education Today cover story: On becoming a reader.* Retrieved from: http://www.davidbouchard.com/About.html.

specifically Canadian landscapes. Bouchard's beautifully illustrated, creative, poetic texts are social and political commentaries on re-/connection from his late-to-life understanding of his own marginalized cultural histories. The texts explicitly reflect particular geographies and histories. From the windswept Prairie to the jagged beauty of the West Coast, the narrative and the illustrations are woven together to create a picture of re-/connection for readers. In many ways Bouchard's texts reflect Lorimer's (1993) description of cultural publishing as inclusive of "social and political commentary, minority group voices, regional titles, poetry, in short, books published for their original ideas or creative expression" (p. 212). The stunning illustrations that support the narrative range from symbolic representations created in response to the textual cues to documentations of the artist's lived experience.[3]

Several concepts underpin the approach taken to Bouchard's texts in this article. One is Bourdieu's (1973) notion of cultural capital, an asset Bouchard began 'accumulating' only as an adult and therefore only then able to celebrate. Another is Freebody and Luke's (1990) acknowledgement of the historical and cultural determinants of literacy performance, here considered specifically in socio-cultural terms and the several related roles readers can assume in critical terms in engaging with Bouchard's dual language texts (Freebody & Luke, 1990, p.7). The cultural capital and expanded sense of literacy Bouchard gains he shares generously with his readership through his texts, creating a link and sense of potential connection to a culture which the reader may or may not share. Through the underpinning terms of language and landscape, Bouchard explores his expanded sense of cultural capital and literacies to support his agency, reclaiming his Indigenous/Inuit/Métis cultural heritages to create a sense of place: home.

Finding Place, Finding Home

This article was born out of an interest in social justice that blossomed while I was teaching in a remote northern Cree reserve community, an experience that shifted my academic and pedagogical direction entirely. When I sit down to write, I envision former Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit students I had the good fortune to teach and by whom I was taught. Now I also have the privilege to see their beautiful and rapidly growing children. With the recent calls made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a social shift appears to be beginning, so that when I think of what postsecondary schooling will be like for these former students' children when they are grown I have hope that the shift is a positive one. I am a White woman, and it was on 'the rez' that I became aware of my own privileged position and understood that the opportunities I had enjoyed were directly linked to my cultural position. Each time that I sit down to engage with Cree literature, I think of former students, now demonstrating leadership in many ways in their community. That sense of responsibility they endowed, embedded in their trust, is with me as strongly now as it was when they surprised me by asking after only a month of school if I would return to teach them the next year. I have been given the privilege of being able to observe the students' success and I have wished for them to see their culture in what they would learn in postsecondary schooling, should they wish to pursue that route, just as I had seen my own culture unquestionably in the curriculum throughout my years in school. I grew up in the Maritimes with European-descended roots on both sides of the family. The majority of my peers had similar backgrounds. The curriculum taught us primarily about the accomplishments of Europeans and the European descendants of our cultural groups, although an elective option for a single Native

[3] The illustrations are not reproduced within the article due to copyright concerns and, simply, small reproductions would not do them justice.

Studies class was offered in Grade 12, so we rarely thoughtfully considered alternative histories or narratives.

The students to whom I taught Language Arts and English in the far north, without being aware of it, were teaching me how to become a border crosser (Giroux, 1992). While they daily moved fluidly between Cree and English, their movement illustrated for me the epistemological, political, cultural, and social margins from and with which they engaged (Giroux, 1992, p. 28). In a new and unfamiliar environment where I was located as Other, yet welcomed, I began to appreciate the strengths and limitations of the frames of our inherited locations (Giroux, 1992, p. 28). Rather than reversing the paradigm of Us versus Them, the border crossing the students demonstrated, and which I began to try to emulate, offered us the opportunity to grow together. In so doing, I began to recognize some of the limitations of the pedagogy which I had brought with me and I began to look for new ways of being in the classroom. Without realizing it, the students' code-switching (Stigter, 2006), or their fluid movement between languages (specifically Cree and English) invited me to begin my journey as a linguistic and cultural code-breaker, as Freebody and Luke (1990, p.7) term it, while I often tried to press friends who spoke the language fluently to put the verbal lessons they were teaching me to written form so that I could study it. While I could sound out the letters in simple texts in Cree that used standard Roman orthography, and, later, in Inuktitut, and at times recognize simple words or parts of words, my later progress with Cree and Inuktitut syllabics was much more painfully slow.

As I began to examine available dual language texts that would help me learn about the students' language and culture and help them to see themselves in the curriculum, thereby recognizing their cultural capital, I began to reflect upon how such texts were and could be read. When I had an opportunity at the postsecondary level to introduce mainly White pre-service teachers to a variety of Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit texts that they could add to their teaching repertoires, the texts often became launching points for discussions related to my experiences in northern Canada and in the Arctic Circle and, by extension, they often led to substantive discussions of broader issues of social justice. Exploring dual language texts such as those like David Bouchard's picture books offers a rich opportunity for expanding the role of literature-based study in social justice pedagogy. Bouchard offers insights into social justice through his reclamation of his Indigenous/Inuit/Métis cultural heritages, affirmed through the themes of and engagement with language and landscape and supported in the paratextual melodies and songs that frame his narratives and create an undeniable sense of place and belonging.

Bouchard's texts embody and are exemplars of his search for and re-/connection to place. Just as he became a kind of code-breaker of his own linguistic—and cultural—'ancestral paths (Freebody & Luke, 1990, p.7), slowly building his cultural capital, so too does he invite his readers to do the same. Bouchard's numerous historical and cultural determinants of literacy performance become clearer in tandem with his gains in knowledge about his Indigenous roots. In reading his past through new socio-cultural lenses and sharing the narratives he learns through his role as raconteur, he supports an expanded notion of literacy development in others. His texts lend themselves to reading through the lens of Freire's (1971) teacher-learner/learner-teacher paradigm (p.56). As Bouchard teaches his readers about the Indigenous cultures and languages and narratives in Canada, so does he expand his understanding of his own cultural and linguistic history and place, rendering in literary form Freire's (1985) notion of conscientization, recognizing the dynamic mode of the construction of the world. In engaging with Bouchard's texts, reading is "preceded by and intertwined with knowledge of the world. Language and reality are dynamically interconnected" (Freire, 1987, p.29). With each new text and engagement with Indigenous

language(s), Bouchard brings his awareness of the world to his writing and his awareness of the world shifts again.

Also underpinning this article is Bourdieu's (1973) notion of cultural capital. When one's culture is communicated freely in classroom and privileged parents possessing greater cultural capital help students master standard school curriculum and participate in the school community, such students (I recognize myself here, in retrospect) are often able to achieve greater academic success (DiMaggio, 1982; Lareau, 1987; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Sullivan, 2001). While I quickly recognized the disconnect between home culture and school culture for the northern Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit students I taught, I had limited means and knowledge on how to address it at the time. In Nunavut, while Inuit *Quajimajatuqangit*, which refers to traditional knowledges, values, and skills, are incorporated into the Arctic school curriculum, in the school at which I spent a year there was a clear divide between those who felt confident in teaching provincial curriculum and those confident in Inuit *Quajimajatuqangit* (traditional knowledges, values, and skills) with strong local cultural knowledge. The students benefited from both forms of expertise. Bouchard, successful in the school environment and able to enjoy a career as a teacher and principal, was clearly possessed of one form of cultural capital. Later in life, when he began to engage with his Indigenous ancestry, he was able to access and celebrate another form of cultural capital. In connecting and re-connecting to the landscapes through which he moves, and through exploring the directions in which language and memories take him, Bouchard creates cultural books that invite in a range of audiences, from early readers to educators, from those beginning to learn about an Indigenous culture to those maintaining their Indigenous language(s). The cultural capital Bouchard gains through his continued exploration of his ancestry and subsequently in sharing through his cultural books, creates a link and sense of potential connection to a culture which the reader may or may not share.

Bouchard uses his dual language texts to create a 'home' through language and landscape in which he reclaims his historical and present Indigenous, Inuit, and Métis cultural heritages. Bouchard was unaware until he was an adult that he might be possessed of additional forms of cultural capital, narratives, and literacies. In his journeys to reclaim silenced cultural capital for himself and his daughter, Bouchard celebrates the family's cultural heritage. His subsequent creation of cultural texts supports literacy development and Indigenous language revitalization and maintenance for his readers. Bouchard's dual language texts can be used as part of a decolonizing pedagogy. His reclamation of ancestral cultural narratives invite multiple forms of audience reading strategies and similarly invite reflection upon the interconnections of identity, landscape, language, and literacy. Bouchard's own shared code-breaking, both linguistic and cultural, (Freebody & Luke, 1990, p.7) reinforces his connection to landscape. Underpinned by language and landscape, the sense of agency and evolving cultural capital that Bouchard claims create for him a sense of place and a coming home to his predecessors' narratives and literacies.

Implications of a Decolonizing Pedagogy

Social Justice and Reclaiming Narratives

Bouchard's texts can be employed as part of a decolonizing pedagogy, such as through critical literacy and the lens of social justice. Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002), in exploring sociopolitical issues in critical literacy, note the connection of literacy to cultural citizenship and its relationship to consciousness as an underpinning element to praxis (p. 383-384). The significance of a sense of cultural citizenship is underscored in many of Bouchard's cultural books.

The Song Within My Heart (2002b) for example, which won the 2004 Governor General's Award, shares the narrative of a boy preparing for a significant cultural event: his first pow-wow. The Grandmother, Nokum, teaches her grandson that there are stories and songs that are a part of his learning journey that belong to him as much his as his own heart. She asserts how he deserves to possess and celebrate story as cultural capital:

> A story is a sacred thing
> That should be passed from age to youth
> I choose to share my best with you
> That you might own and share them too. (2002b, np)

Bouchard's attempts to reclaim the narratives of his past and his linguistic history resonate from the page. He models for readers his own imaginative process of becoming, as Freebody & Luke (1990) term it, a text participant (p.7), drawing upon his newly gained cultural knowledge. As with other texts, through the narrator's voice, Bouchard acknowledges his grandmother's influence and reaches out explicitly to his audience:

> If you, dear reader, hear me sing
> And can't make out my message
> You should not fret, I was like you
> I had to learn to listen too! (2002b, np)

It is, ultimately, his re-/connection with his grandmother that leads him to his success, based in his reclamation of his own language and narrative history and his care for and connection with the land—those elements underpinning cultural capital. Becoming a "text participant", as suggested through his work, is a constantly evolving process. Whether Bouchard's texts demonstrate a rhyming scheme in English or take the form of fluid prose poetry, his rich intersections and interstices invite many forms of study. Whyte (2002) celebrates the non-translatability of foreign-language poetry, which can be extended here in reference to the challenge of reading and interpreting the translations of Bouchard's poetic narrative: "What matter [sic] most are the places one cannot understand, the ones that fail to make sense" (p. 68). Such places mark opportunities for growth as cultural readers, engaging even more deeply with the culture being represented. To reclaim his Indigenous/Inuit/Métis cultural heritages and create a sense of place, Bouchard had to learn to listen carefully and to pay attention in the process of gaining cultural capital. In so doing, he was able to celebrate his self-embodiment of the teacher-student/student-teacher paradigm (Freire, 1971) and his newfound ability to engage as a text participant (Freebody & Luke, 1990, p.7) in new contexts. Bouchard's participation in textual meaning-making is embodied in his acts of learning about his ancestral cultures through his explorations of family memories. These acts of engagement help him to discover previously unknown Indigenous narratives and he integrates these narratives and ideas into his familial story. Bouchard not only seeks to expand his understanding of place for himself and his daughter but shares his journey through narrative to draw attention to and dialogue about the positive impact of cultural awareness. The texts themselves stand as acknowledgement of the multiplicity of historical and cultural determinants of literacy performance. His engagement in the narratives and traditions and pictorial representations of his Indigenous predecessors is represented in numerous forms through Bouchard's dual language cultural books. Bouchard's border-crossing (Giroux, 1992) texts,

inspired by his daughter and enabled by his grandmother, invite and encourage his readers to become border-crossers themselves.

Alternative Reading Strategies/Alternative Audiences

Reading Bouchard's dual language texts with a close eye leads to a potential variety of reading strategies in support of building cultural capital. The texts also lend themselves to be interesting to a variety of readers or text users. Gentes' (2013) work with self-translated texts might be extended, arguably, as a frame for engaging with Bouchard's texts. Gentes identifies four potential groups of readers: monolingual and bilingual readers, language learners, and literary scholars. She suggests that different text users employ the following divergent reading strategies in engaging with texts: "only one version is read; one version is read, while the other is only consulted when necessary; both versions are read in a comparative manner, successively or simultaneously" (p. 271). Bouchard's texts, however, bear examining beyond a limiting emergent literacy or elementary language arts framework. They offer rich opportunities for supporting Indigenous language revitalization and language maintenance. For Indigenous language learners, Bouchard's texts are accessible for several reasons. First, they are quite literally accessible since they are available through mainstream publishers. Second, they are accessible in terms of content. Third, they are accessible in terms of language: the Indigenous language is not only paralleled with English text but the entire text is aurally available on a CD so that readers can hear what the language sounds like when spoken by an Indigenous speaker. Bouchard's texts have a potentially important role to play in language revival or language maintenance for language learners.

Dual language cultural books such as Bouchard's can be read and interpreted in many ways. The extra-textual or paratextual features of such texts can add to or complicate one's understanding, based on one's cultural positioning and cultural capital. Not only can Bouchard's texts serve to support language revitalization or language maintenance, they can offer audiences who might not otherwise have contact with the culture represented in the text an opportunity to learn about the language and landscape and music of the culture. Because the CDs also offer music that complements and contextualizes the Michif or Indigenous language, they support forms of textual code-breaking/participation/use/analysis through cultural border-crossing and individual re-examination of reading and learning paradigms (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Freire, 1971, 1985, 1987; Giroux, 1992) that leads Bouchard and his readers to a sense of home. In terms of accessibility and invitation to engage in a participatory manner with the text, Bouchard's works are exemplars of how texts can be read at a variety of reading levels and through a range of lenses. For literary scholars, and also for educators of pre-service teachers, reading these texts can support social justice pedagogy and forms of border-crossing (Giroux, 1992) and the texts offer dialogic opportunities for a range of individual readers and reading communities. The uncomplicated diction also renders the texts accessible by younger readers—for whom "picture books" are usually intended. They can be read by middle years students learning about histories and cultures or learning to create texts and art works of their own. They can be read by educators using inclusive and multicultural texts in their classrooms. They can be read by environmentalists who want to protect the land. And they can be read for the pleasure of the languages and images presented on the pages. Because the text is arranged in such a way as to render it accessible, with English or French and Michif or Cree or Kwak'wala or Mi'kmaq or Ojibwe placed in parallel forms and with a CD that offers a fluid audio reading of the First Nations or Métis language and musical contextualization, the texts create a bridge between European-descended storytelling and Indigenous' traditions. Here there are rich opportunities for border-crossing and all of the intrinsic

challenges and opportunities therein. The texts demonstrate a range of historical and cultural determinants of literacy performance and the related critical literacy roles readers can assume in engaging with Bouchard's dual language cultural books.

Bouchard's texts often demonstrate his careful sense of self-reflection and subjectivity and responsibility to his predecessors, providing them with the voice that they were neither permitted nor given an avenue to share. On Bouchard's website, he mourns that he does not know his grandmother's stories and songs or her grandmother's stories and songs—their cultural capital: "When I share Native and Métis stories and songs with my daughter Victoria, I tell her that I don't know which belong to us and that until such time that I do, she can claim them all as her own" (nd).[4] His daughter, then, represents yet another group of text users (Freebody & Luke, 1990, p.7): those who have been separated from their ancestral culture(s) and are seeking to learn about and reconnect with their respective traditions. Bouchard models a form of migration between cultures as he seeks to span diverse cultures in linguistic and visual terms. He is, in some ways, both an author and a theorist, consciously engaging with language and culture and seeking to create his place—a home that feels authentic on many levels. Williams (2013) notes that "It is striking how many theorists are migrants, either by choice or necessity. Migration, itself an act of translation, inevitably entails an encounter with the Other . . . A significant number of theorists are (bilingual) speakers of minority languages and have therefore been confronted with issues of language and power, in which translation is inevitably implicated" (p. 120). While Bouchard's texts are translated by fluent Indigenous language speakers, it is interesting to consider the degree to which Bouchard also feels himself a cultural migrant, engaging in issues of language and power through writing his narratives of Indigeneity in the dominant languages of English and French. Bouchard's acts of migrancy, or border-crossing, through landscape and language and culture through his texts act as reclamation and embrace of his grandmother's power and history and connection to the land for her granddaughter and of his own connection to the Métis unarticulated, in some ways untranslatable, narratives. His celebration of the marked growth of his cultural capital and access to ancestral memory through his grandmother provides a demonstration of and an opportunity for readers to engage with notions of place and cross-cultural communication.

Creating Connections and Identities

Bouchard's dual language texts are an open journey of re-/connection to cultural capital in linguistic, visual, and physical terms. Cultural capital translates into an expanded sense of identity and with it expanded literacies, which he shares not only with his daughter but with his readership. His texts might best be described as "crosscultural poetics in dual discourse" (Hokenson, 2013, p. 54), as he links language and place to identity formation and, by extension, to a larger sense of community with his readership. His literary engagement with and reclamation of his cultural and linguistic histories demonstrates how such literacy can serve to support "individual and social emancipation and the foundation of civilization" (Lorimer, 1993, p. 204), particularly when readers are interacting critically with texts as text analysts (Freebody & Luke, 1990, p.7). In the preface of the text *Seven Sacred Teachings of White Buffalo Calf Woman: Niizhaaswi Gagiikwewin*, Bouchard writes:

[4] Bouchard, D. (nd). *Métis heritage: My story is that of many Métis.* Retrieved from: http://davidbouchard.com/about.

> It is our hope that this telling will unite and thus heal divisions. Prophecies tell that this is the time for One Heart, One Mind and One Drum. We, readers and authors alike, are the ones we have been waiting for.
> Inashke owe dibaajimowin mii'omaa ge-ondinamang, ji-okonoojimooyamg. Ogowe gichi-anishinaabeg giwindamaagonaanig ningo-naanaagadawendamowin, ningode', dewe'igan. Gaa-agindaasoyang gaye gaa-ozhibii'igeyang, miiwag ogowe gaabaaii'angwaa apane. (2009, np)

Even before one engages with the text, the impetus for connection is rendered clear.

Bouchard asserts the influence of his great-grandmother's spirit in uncovering his Métis heritage and genetic memories (nd).[5] These genetic memories began his journey to his present understanding of himself and his place. His place, he proudly proclaims, is among the Métis nation. On the frontispiece of *The Secret of Your Name: Kiimooch ka Shinikashooyen*, there is a subtitle: *Proud to be Métis*. The narrator, Bouchard, who is pictured throughout the text's illustrations, shares that he hears his grandmother in his dreams then writes what he learns (2010, p. 24):

> through song and dance and stories
> I might come to know that which is mine.
> Through memories you have taught me …
> Chi shapookishkaytamaan lii shaansoon pi lii daans pi lii zistwayr
> Tadbaen ga paekishkayten kaykway ka tipaytamaan.
> Aen ishi nakatwaytamaan kii kishkinamawin. (2010, p. 28)

The narrative mourns the loss of Bouchard's connection to the cultures and languages of his Anishnaabe, Montagnais, Chippewa, Menominee, Algonquin, and Ojibwa heritages. Again he writes of his grief at not knowing his grandmother's stories (2010, p. 20). The translation in Michif is "en face" to the English text: "Nokoom sid valeur chi itwaeyaan/ Nimoo gishkaytenn tii zistwayr" (2010, p. 21). In the foreword, Bouchard writes, "I am one whose grandmothers were Anishnaabe, Chippewa, Menominee and Innu" (2010, p. 2): "Miiya payek nookoomuk lii anishnabe, ojibwe, Menominee pi lii Innu" (2010, p. 4). He promises that not only will he seek out the songs that belong to him and claim them and teach them to his children (2010, p. 18) but he "will live [his] life to Honour [her]" (2010, p. 18)/ "Ga pimatishin chi kishchitaymitaan" (2010, p. 19), a living practice he underscores in his use of uppercase. Bouchard's search for identity, or perhaps more accurately, the identities and histories he did not know to claim as his own, emerged from the displacement of other Métis peoples like himself and the silencing of their narratives and literacies.

Finding and reclaiming silenced narratives and exploring new literacies underpins establishing both narrative and geographic place. Bouchard provides a model of reading through the lens (or lenses) of cultural identity/identities that can support Indigenous and non-Indigenous language and literacy learners. His texts invoke and invite alternative reading strategies and are inclusive in their strategic outreach to a variety of reading audiences. In connecting his work to the Truth and Reconciliation's Committee's call to actions, Bouchard states, "My work has shifted somewhat since the release of the TRC. Much of my focus now lies in the 'T'... Not the 'Truth' in

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[5] Bouchard, D. (nd). *Métis heritage: My story is that of many Métis.* Retrieved from: http://www.davidbouchard.com/About.

'Truth and Reconciliation', but rather in the 'T' that precedes it, 'Trust'".[6] That intention of manifesting mutual trust, he suggests, can be established through the partnership created in moving forward together with common goals through the complex processes of literacy in reading, interpreting, and writing. Indeed, as Chief Justice Murray Sinclair stated firmly, "There can be no reconciliation without education".[7] Bouchard's texts suggest that through revisiting stories of cultural identity, past and present, through a mutually respectful giving and receiving of narrative, reconciliation can occur.

Landscape

Bouchard's Prairie Connection

The landscapes which have shaped Bouchard's sense of identity underpins the terms he employs in his dual language texts to create a place in which he is able to reclaim his Indigenous/Inuit/Métis cultural heritages. In Bouchard's texts, the Canadian landscape is foregrounded in the connection to home and the reclamation of cultural heritage. For example, in *Prairie Born*, written for his parents for their Golden Anniversary, he marries his poetry with Peter Shostak's paintings to evoke the experience of growing up on the prairies: wide expanses of landscape, the hard work involved in farm life, and the simple pleasures of winter activities. The narrator asserts in the refrain that it is more than his memories that set him apart (1997, np). He acknowledges that the physical landscape had a formative role in his identity from infancy, noting that his "hair's mostly wind . . . . [his] eyes filled with grit/ . . . [his] lips chapped and split" (1997, np). Furthermore, the cold, the narrator suggests, has "taken the credit for what's come to be me" (1997, np). I can still recall with clarity the walks that my Cree friends took me on in the remote northern Prairie landscape, showing me important rocks and sharing narratives, explaining how to offer tobacco to the land for the chokecherries gathered and sharing stories of picking herbs with their *kokums*[8]. Whenever I could make it back for a visit, I was always given a large bag of wild peppermint for my favorite tea. The landscape and climate have an indelible role in identity formation: written in the hair and on the skin, the environment of home leaves a marked imprint upon the physical bodies living within it. The impetus for connection, or reconnection, to home is tied to the landscape in remarkable and ineffaceable ways. The landscape itself is rendered part of Bouchard's cultural capital.

Place shapes knowledge and understanding and experience, and can also underpin cultural capital and cultural determinants of literacy performance. Savage (2012) asserts that on the prairie "things hide in plain view" (p. 68) and the land invokes its inhabitants and travelers to "pay attention" (p.73). For *If You're Not From the Prairie…*, which Bouchard dedicated to his parents, the cover features Henry Ripplinger's representation of two children playing in the grass at the edge of a field of golden waving grain, grain elevators visible in the distance far beyond home and barn. The first image in the text, underlying the dedication and title of the text, offers the reader an image of the bright prairie sky. The text celebrates the unique relationship of prairie inhabitants with the expansive prairie sky, the flatness of the plain, the sound of swaying grasses and grains, and the hardy prairie trees. Bouchard teases Canadian readers who are not from the Prairies about

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[6] Bouchard, D. (nd). *Truth & reconciliation*. Retrieved from: http://www.davidbouchard.com/speaking/truth_and_reconciliation.

[7] Sinclair, M. 2015. *Building Bridges: Welcome*. University of Saskatchewan. 17 Nov.

[8] Grandmothers.

knowing wind and cold: “You’ll not find among us a soul who can say:/ ‘I’ve conquered the wind on a cold winter’s day” (1993, np). In a refrain Bouchard revisited in *Prairie Born*, he shares:

> My hair’s mostly wind,
> My eyes filled with grit,
> My skin’s red or brown,
> My lips chapped and split. (1993, np)

As he draws the text to a close, Bouchard links his prairie soul inextricably to the landscape of his youth: the blizzards, the cold, the wind, the sky, the earth, the storms, the snow, and the sun , which are all a part of his mind and his heart (1993, np). Homages to the text’s prairie-born creators also peer out mischievously from the nostalgic images in the text. In the illustrations, the weathered homes and barns serve as backdrops to inhabitants who play, contemplate the land, and enjoy the Prairie’s picturesque sunsets. The strong sentiments of the text are echoed in the expansive illustrations, rendering explicit the strength of connection between Bouchard and the landscape in which he was born and spent many years.

The Canadian landscape defines his identity, his soul, his mind, and his heart, and Bouchard asserts in *Happy Centennial Saskatchewan* that the strength of his connection to the landscape endures. He acknowledges that he still thinks of the prairie landscape as home despite his absence from it, recognizing the prairie’s effect in shaping him (2004, np). The landscape inspires his earliest cultural capital and the accompanying forms of cultural literacies. References to the hard winter, a form of Prairie cultural capital shaped by hard experience, also appear in *Happy Centennial Saskatchewan*: “You can’t think of Saskatchewan/ Without thinking of winter” (2004, np). He writes of people’s pride in the provincial history, and one can almost hear the laughter in the narrative when he agrees, “Yet ask us what Saskatchewan is/And ***we’ll*** all say, *‘It’s winter’*” (emphasis in original; 2004, np). As in *Prairie Born* and *If You’re Not From the Prairie*, the wind, the sun, the earth, the sky and the cold make appearances as formative entities to prairie character. The reader cannot but help be struck by the majestic depictions of the prairie sky, the wide expanses of grain fields, the snowy distances, the poignancy of the cemetery at Batoche, or the tree-rimmed lakes of northern Saskatchewan in this text complemented by Hans Herold’s paintings.

Bouchard’s West Coast Connection

The narrative of *The Colours of British Columbia* similarly reveals the strength of connection to land and landscapes articulated in both *Prairie Born* and *If You’re Not From the Prairie*…. Bouchard articulates his experience of the particular pigments that define the West Coast: “*I was used to the colours I’d brought from the prairie and thought that I’d see little more*” (emphasis in original; 1994, p. 8). His new exposure to colour shows him that in BC, colour is not simply landscape and season but rather in the very people who inhabit the province (1994, p. 29). While the landscapes against which Bouchard positions himself shift, so too does his expanding sense of himself shift as a border-crosser accumulating new awareness, new cultural capital, and new cultural literacies, celebrating the lessons he learns with his readers.

In *The Elders Are Watching*, Roy Henry Vickers’ illustrations help readers to visualize Bouchard’s verbal images of the West Coast landscape. The text’s images bear some particular attention, as it is Bouchard’s relationship with his place and space as facilitated by his Great-Grandmother that has precipitated much of his work. In “Thoughts” composed on the Tsartlip

Reserve and which precedes the narrative, Vickers notes, “Revival, culture, heritage, environment, these are key words for this last decade of the century. . . Change comes from understanding . . . fostered from knowledge of our past, our cultural heritage, and our environment. . . . Such changes can affect our many relationships . . . and the one we have with our environment” (1990, np). Bouchard parallels this observation with “Whispers,” telling of a boy whose Ya’A[9] told him narratives of “the Old Ones—the Elders. And as the stories slowly became part of him . . . he began to see them. They appeared as images suspended in the air, up toward the sun. Their lips were still, yet he heard them speak” (1990, np). The striking illustrations accompanying the text superimpose images of the Elders, the Old Ones, within the dramatic landscape of the West Coast. The spirit of Eagle is in the air and in the rock, the spirit of Fish and Whales in the water, the small spirits of Crabs and Fish and Birds in the sand, and the deforested mountain side is watched by an animal spirit observing from the moon. An image of abandoned decaying totems is juxtaposed with the relief of bright colors in other illustrations. Here, the images suggest, one is surrounded by cultural capital if one has the capacity to see—and read—it.

Language and landscape are inextricably linked; the environment shapes experience and language seeks to find ways to describe those experiences within that landscape. Bouchard uses his dual language texts to rediscover “home” in the environment. In the foreword to *The Elders are Watching*, ‘Whispers,’ the narrator notes: “The boy looked much the same as the other kids in his class. . . . it wasn’t his appearance that made him different. . . . He and his “Ya’A” would share the words of the Elders often with all those who cared to listen—with all those who cared at all” (1990, p. 7):

> *They told me to tell you the time has come.*
> *They want you to know how they feel.*
> *So listen carefully, look toward the sun.*
> *The Elders are watching*. (1990, p. 14, 22, 30, 38, 46, 54; emphasis in original)

This refrain recurs every fourth verse and closes the narrative. Despite the concern the narrative voice articulates from the Elders, the Elders wish to reinforce that it is not all comfortless (1990; p. 40). The Elders see reason for hope—that people are beginning to listen, to pay attention to the landscape and environment and to the messages that they, the Elders, attempt to share through voices such as the listening boy and his Ya-A.

Like the listening boy, Bouchard also explores the notion of listening to and reading the landscape with a fictionalized narrative of his French ancestry in *The Journal of Étienne Mercier: Queen Charlotte Islands 1853*, a text dedicated to his son Étienne. In “Mon Journal,” Étienne the voyageur writes: “I have been a voyageur, a trappeur, a coureur de bois and other thing [sic]. Today, I don’t know what I am” (1998, np). Like Étienne, Bouchard’s journey from “I don’t know what I am” (1998, np) to the embrace of his dis-covered/un-covered cultural heritage(s) with their accompanying culturally-determined literacies informs his shifting understanding of not only his own identity but his corresponding historical place, each with their own corresponding forms of cultural capital linked both to place and to the language of place.

The environment, it should be noted here, is not just the landscape of earth and water, but air and sky and moon and stars. The environment is a significant contributor to the landscapes in which Bouchard finds identity and agency and in which he discovers the path to his Indigenous/Inuit/Métis cultural homes, each with their own forms of cultural capital and cultural

[9] Grandfather.

literacies. The stunning visual artistry of *Beneath Raven Moon* (2012) interweaves images evocative of photography with the unique West Coast style. Central to the text is the brilliantly golden illustration of the birth of Grandmother Moon. Brilliant colours epitomize, too, *The Seven Sacred Teachings of Buffalo Calf Woman*. The latter text also boasts a multilingual DVD, including English, French, Ojibwe, Bush Cree, South Slavey, and Chipewyan language. It is also worth mentioning here that an essential part of the landscape is the creatures that inhabit it. Bouchard's preface is complemented by an image of turtle, where the scutes of her carapace embody animals of air and land and water, rendering explicit the interconnectedness of animals, people, and the environment, a teaching rendered visually explicit again with the teaching on Love/Zaagi'idiwin. Together, language, land, and knowledge of its inhabitants form a cultural capital specific to place.

Language as Cultural Capital

The oral readings of Bouchard's texts on CD are underpinned and underscored by the complementary musical intervals that highlight melodies and beats ranging from Buffy Sainte-Marie to Northern Cree to Mary Youngblood playing the Native American flute, which, notably, Bouchard also plays during speaking engagements. These CDs are not only significant for independent reading but can become important teaching tools in the classroom. Greene (1978) notes that "Our seeing is affected by our culture, our experiences, and certainly by what we have learned" (p.192). So, too, what one is able to hear is affected by culture and experience. For me, the Northern Cree evoke warm memories of round dances and trying moose nose soup. Pautz (1998) asserts that teachers need to make the effort to understand the differences and similarities between their culture and that of their students (p.35), and the music and language of the CDs can help portray cultures that may or may not be shared by the teacher or members of the class, thus helping students to understand that there are variations in cultural capital and similar variations in understandings of literacy. Literacy in the Arctic, I was taught, also means being able to read the formation of snow on the landscape, i.e. being able to interpret the small, white waves formed by the wind during a blizzard, to engage thoughtfully with *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, and to seek familiarity with the syllabic script. As a child, I had perceived literacy as being limited to reading a book.

Language spoken by native speakers carries musical cadences that can be missed by non-native or even non-local speakers. Place and home often carry particular cadences. The cadence of language is a significant support to agency in Bouchard's access to and re-/accumulation of cultural capital and the accompanying literacies. According to hooks (1995), we "attempt to recover ourselves and our experiences in language" (p. 301). In his attempt to recover himself and his experiences, Bouchard dedicates *Nokum is My Teacher* (2006), for which he won Bronze Medal in the Moonbeam Award, to his own Nokum, of whom he learned through an Odawa Elder. He recognizes his kokum's presence in his very genetic make-up and the memories he credits her sharing: "I recognize your presence and I celebrate our family's collective memories. Nokum, I know now that YOU are my teacher. My successes are OUR successes. Marcee…" (emphasis in original; 2007, np). His kokum's cultural capital, he asserts, is once more available, and he shares it so that other Métis readers like him can participate in the accumulation of cultural capital and cultural literacy as well as offering the opportunity to readers from other cultural groups. Like Savage (2012), Bouchard hears and follows the "Something [he] couldn't name . . . urging [him] on, challenging him to pay attention and remember. The imperative [that] seemed to emanate from the hills themselves, with their treasury of bones and stones and narratives" (p. 153). Bouchard's

attempts to recover himself and his familial, genetic history and memories occur through complex linguistic negotiation underpinned by his recovery of his links to the landscape. He treads the "pathways connecting household to household and household to the land; the pathways, worn by feet and honoured by stories" (Herriot, 2000, p. 40). Bouchard is indeed a cultural ambassador leading a new and inclusive path through his storytelling, his sharing of the treasury of narratives to which his kokum awakens him. Bouchard was made a Member of the Order of Canada in 2009.[10] His stories represent his connection to and celebration of his re-discovered cultures, which are, as Herriot (2000) argues, "a membrane, marked by the local imprint of creation, through which we conduct a healthy interchange with the wild. A lithograph or *geo*graph if you will, imprinted by the self-organizing networks of the land and made up of our stories, our beliefs, or pathways, our economies, and our work" (emphasis in original; p. 51). Shaped and framed by Canadian landscapes and its Indigenous languages, Bouchard's linguistic negotiation leads on a journey to a cultural home that effectively spans the gaps between his French roots and his First Nations and Innu ones through his connection to the landscapes of home.

Bouchard's texts can be examined for the insights into culture the illustrations might offer and for the narratives that appear in structurally parallel English or French and Michif or Cree or Kwak'wala or Mi'kmaq or Ojibwe. Reclaiming his cultural place/home is an act of agency that is supported in linguistic terms in each engagement with cultural border-crossing. Yet the narratives simultaneously suggest the impossibility of exact translation and certain limitations of understanding for readers unfamiliar with the Michif or Indigenous culture being represented in the text. For example, in Bouchard's *Nokum is My Teacher* (2006), the speaker says to his grandmother, "You've taught me everything I know … Piko kikway kâkiskitamân/ ê-kiskinohamôwihin" (np). Similar to what the reader understands of Étienne and his search for Clement, what is un/known about the culture and the environment being represented in the text defines how the reader engages with the text's representations of literacies—cultural, linguistic, and visual. Bouchard's texts challenge pre-existing interpretation strategies readers bring to their engagement with the text and so the texts support or can potentially scaffold cultural competence. The texts offer readers an opportunity to engage with and practice multifaceted reading strategies that can support multilingual and multicultural competencies that can lead to real shifts (Klimkiewicz, 2013, p. 199), such as that which is arguably being seen in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The texts also create a place for fruitful dialogue about texts in that Bouchard's oeuvre represents and embodies his journey to discover his heritage and regain his languages and narratives and place(s). Because of his particular place in terms of citizenship, historically and socially and perhaps even geographically, he possesses an ability to shift fluidly between cultures and achieves linguistic success in negotiating languages in ways that were not permitted for his predecessors.

Bouchard's dual language texts offers an opportunity for readers to become conscious of and examine the dynamics created in the juxtaposition and relationship of the languages presented on the page, just as landscapes juxtaposed with each other demonstrate their marked differences. Although written in English and translated, the dual language texts create a dialogic space in which discussion can occur about readings and "the gaps between the two versions, languages, and cultures" (Gentes, 2013, p. 268-9). Finding these gaps in meaning of which Gentes speaks, however, does require a level of fluency, or literacy, that many readers do not possess. However,

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[10] Bouchard, D. (2010). *David Bouchard named to the Order of Canada.* Retrieved from: http://www.davidbouchard.com/about

a first step towards dialogue with a linguistic community is the opportunity for listening made possible through text and the extra-textual support of audio text and music.

Like the landscapes of environments, one must learn to read to texts according to the specific markers presented. Bouchard uses his dual language cultural books to create a space and a home in which he reclaims his cultural heritage and citizenship and generously shares the cultural capital and cultural literacies he accumulates. Through his negotiation of multiple languages within the Canadian landscapes within which he moves, he creates a sense of place or home into which he invites the reader so that readers, too, can find their home. He negotiates the Indigenous/Inuit/Métis and dominant cultures of his ancestry through the underpinning terms of landscape and language and, ultimately, finds home within multiple cultures and histories. Through the dual language textual form in which he creates a sense of place, Bouchard creates a space of reclamation of his cultural heritage and we, as readers, are grateful for his generosity in sharing his wisdom.

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